503

PFLP

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a816

R I6036)1RYRZ0TRYR

AM-MIDEAST-IMAM

BEIRUT: JUNE 2: REUTER - A RADICAL PALESTINIAN GUERRILLA GROUP TODAY CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSASSINATING THE RELIGIOUS LEADER OF THE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED GAZA STRIP: AND WARNED THAT GAZA'S MAYOR WOULD BE NEXT.

IN A STATEMENT ISSUED IN DAMASCUS: THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (PFLP) SAID ONE OF ITS UNITS HAD STABBED SHEIKH HASHEM HUSANDAR TO DEATH YESTERDAY EVENING.

THE STATEMENT SAID SHEIKH HASHEM: THE IMAM OF GAZA: WAS KILLED FOR ADVOCATING ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN PLANS TO INTRODUCE A FORM OF AUTONOMY IN THE GAZA STRIP AND THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK. THE AUTONOMY PROJECT HAS DRAWN BITTER OPPOSITION FROM ALL PALESTINIANS UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO).

IN BEIRUT: THE PFLP'S NUMBER TWO MAN: KASSAM ABU SHERIF: DESCRIBED THE ASSASSINATION OF SHEIKH HASHEM AS ''THE FIRST REVOLUTIONARY STEP AGAINST ALL THOSE WHO ARE DEALING WITH THE CONSPIRATORIAL AUTONOMY PROJECT.''

MR ABU SHERIF SAID GAZA MAYOR RASHAD AL-SHAWWA WOULD SHARE THE IMAM'S FATE. ''AL-SHAWWA IS PLAYING A ROLE WHICH IS VERY DANGEROUS TO THE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE AND THE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE,'' HE SAID.

MORE 1709

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Quinn DATE 5-9-83
RDS ☐ of XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
IS AUTH. REASON ☐
ENDORSE EX STRNG MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED IN PART ☒
CLASS DENIED ☐
EXEMPTIONS

319

R I6086)1RYRZ0TIYC

AM-MIDEAST-IMAM 2 BEIRUT

MR ABU SHERIF SAID A GROUP LED BY THE MAYOR HAD RECENT CONTACTS WITH ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER EZER WEIZMAN AND EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT.

SHEIKH HUSANDAR HAD TOLD REPORTERS A SHORT TIME AGO HE SUPPORTED BOTH EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVE WITH ISRAEL AND THE PLO AS SPOKESMAN FOR THE PALESTINIANS.

ABOUT 2:000 GAZA RESIDENTS ATTENDED THE IMAM'S FUNERAL THIS MORNING: BUT OBSERVERS NOTED THE ABSENCE OF PROMINENT LOCAL DIGNITARIES.

THE IMAM'S FAMILY PLEDGED TO AVENGE HIS MURDER: CALLING HIM ''THE FIRST VICTIM OF THE DEBATE ABOUT LOCAL AUTONOMY AND SELF-RULE IN THE GAZA REGION.''

THE PFLP STATEMENT SAID THE IMAM IGNORED REPEATED WARNINGS TO DISSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM ISRAELI PLANS FOR LIMITED PALESTINIAN SELF-RULE IN THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP.

REUTER 1710